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for 1857-76. The difference may be attributed almost entirely to the continued fall (slightly interrupted during periods of business depression) in the illegitimate birth rate, since the ratio of legitimate births to marriages — the true test of a declining rate — was practically the same in both periods. The decline in this ratio since 1889 is not due to a decrease in the legitimate birth rate, but is rather indicative of an upward movement in the marriage rate. The ratio may diminish for a number of years even if the marriage and birth rate should rise.

These considerations point to the conclusion that, while illegitimacy may continue to decline, no material fall in the birth rate in the near future need be apprehended. Indeed, it is not unlikely that the marriage and birth rates are even now on the point of rising.

H. J. GERLING.

BIRTH RATE IN FRANCE.

L'affaiblissement de la natalité est-il un bien ou un mal? By Charles Morene. In *La Réforme Sociale*. July, 1898.

The object of this article is to show that from an economic standpoint the low birth rate in France is an evil, and also that the evil is not remedied by immigration.

An increase in the means of subsistence may cause an increase in the birth rate. But other causes, religious, moral, and physiological, may also cause an increase in the rate. In an increasing population there will be a growing demand for labor, which, combined with the effort to maintain if not to improve the standard of living, will lead to a quest for new employments and wider markets. The intelligent and well-to-do attracted by the increased opportunities will direct their attention to business pursuits instead of seeking to enter the service of the State, as they now do in France.

In this manner an increase in the population of intelligent and energetic races that have accumulated capital will stimulate enterprise and thus contribute to the country's prosperity. Thus the wealth of England and of Germany has steadily risen, while France, whose population is stationary, is in danger of losing her old preponderance.

The low birth rate in France being, therefore, a symptom of decay is a great and threatening evil.

Is a sufficient economic advantage gained by immigration to overcome this evil? It seems not. The presence of foreigners does not materially increase the proportion of persons of productive age, as the percentage of children among them is quite as large as among the native French population. Further, a large proportion of the immigrants who come to France do not intend to remain, and many of those who do remain are not assimilated. An increase in the population due to immigration is, therefore, largely fictitious. The foreigners, moreover, are for the most part poor, and many of them, especially the Italians, are wretched and degraded, frequently forming a disturbing element in the community. Such a population can not add to the wealth and commercial prosperity of France. Immigration, therefore, does not contribute sufficiently to the economic advantages of France to compensate for the evil of the low birth rates.

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